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ABSTRACT

Community college planners must be futurists, projecting institutional and program enrollments and funding from tuition and state sources. Yet it is increasingly difficult to make accurate projections even for one year, when factors do not operate as they have in the past. Nevertheless, new trends in people, programs, finances, and facilities can be identified. Trends which concern people include an increasing proportion of older students with career-orientations and interest in high technology programs. Staffing is influenced by inflation; colleges cannot compete with business for new technical faculty, and current faculty can be granted only minimum salary increases, causing many to leave education. In addition, the trustee's role is becoming less pleasurable, and fewer good people want to invest their time. Program trends point to demands for high technology and business administration courses and adult basic education. In finances, inflation may cause schools to short-change their students, as initiatives to alter outdated local tax rates are defeated and state and federal funding curtailed. Trends in facilities indicate more maintenance and modification requirements due to building age and energy costs. Coping with these trends requires reminding the public of the need for postsecondary education, especially at the associate degree level, so that the dream of adequately funded community colleges meeting the needs of a varied student body can persist. (KL)

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IS ANYTHING CLEAR FOR THE 80'S?

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the Kansas Association of Community Colleges. The theme for your conference this year, "Alternative Futures," is certainly intriguing. One of the best ways to attract an audience over the past several years has been for the speaker to claim to be a "futurist."

As a matter of fact, as administrators, trustees, and professional staff members of community colleges, we are all required to be futurists to a greater or lesser degree. A decade or so ago, it did not seem unreasonable to try to plan for a future of ten years, for ten years was seen as a reasonable period of time over which professional educators ought to be able to forecast something fairly concrete about the future. As the 70's progressed, perhaps you have discovered what I have been learning more clearly each year. Future planning must often be limited, in fact, to a period certainly not more than three years, and I have learned painfully that it is even extremely difficult - for many reasons - to plan accurately for even one year.

Let's take a moment to consider some of the predictions you and I face each year. First, we must try to guess within a very narrow range the enrollment for each of our institutions for the year to come. If we are successful in doing that, we have accomplished a major objective. But we must go another step in our enrollment forecasting; we must be able to estimate with some degree of accuracy how that enrollment will distribute itself throughout our various programs. Then, if we have succeeded in the first two forecasts, we have a pretty firm handle on the amount of money we will collect from tuition and from state sources. I don't know how successful each of you may have been in forecasting enrollment over the past ten years, but at Black Hawk College, we have never been able to predict enrollment within 1 or 2%. The fact that we

operate very conservatively when we spend money, and the additional fact that we update the budget during January have allowed us to accommodate some rather substantial deviations from our enrollment predictions.

It really would be reasonable to presume that if we have been successful in predicting enrollments with some degree of accuracy, we ought to know reasonably well what our state funding would be. Unfortunately, at least in Illinois, we have often learned in late July, August or September, after the budget has been developed and approved by the Board, the amount that we would receive in state funding if our enrollment actually was as we had predicted it. In three years since fiscal year 1975, the State of Illinois has had to reduce its planned funding for community colleges, and in one of those years the reduction occurred very late in the fiscal year.

In short, what I am trying to remind all of us is that we face one of the most challenging games ever faced by a group of educators in the history of the world. We really need a very accurate crystal ball, but what we have is something more like what St. Paul was describing in his first letter to the Corinthians, "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." My crystal ball has been very foggy and dark for years. Each year I feel that I can promise the Board and the staff at Black Hawk College very little, for too many factors are operating to confuse and confound any forecasting which my staff and I try to do.

For the past two decades, one activity which has been thought to be a salvation for all long-range planners has been trend analysis. A recent article which I read suggested that trend analysis is now in growing disrepute, for trend lines are too often blown right out of the water by factors operating

now in a manner completely different from the way in which each such factor may have operated in the past. People are reacting psychologically in new ways to old stimuli. Economists across the world are stunned as old theories begin to fail, and new theories are being developed which as yet have not stood any test of time.

The title of my brief speech today, "Is Anything Clear for the 80's?" suggests the great dilemma. On one hand, we need to be able to make some reasonable predictions for planning purposes. On the other hand, new factors are operating against such planning, and old factors are operating in new ways against such planning. The situation will certainly cause us all sleepless nights, but I really do believe there are some trends which we are recognizing now, which will continue and gain strength for at least the next ten years. I will group the trends that I see now under four general headings: people, programs, finances, and facilities. Under each of these headings, I will briefly comment on the things that are happening to us in Illinois, and which are probably similarly happening to you here in Kansas. When I have finished my remarks, there will be plenty of time for me to learn from you, through comments you can offer, about your perception of each of these trends.

As we look at the trends which concern people, we ought to begin with the people we are trying to serve -- students. We have observed that our students are older than traditional college students, in Illinois averaging close to 28 years of age, and this trend toward older students will certainly continue. We may even find that the average age of our students increases, although it does not seem likely to increase very much. In addition, today's students are "bottom-line" oriented, much more than the students of the 60's and early 70's. Our students today are attending community college with a view toward vocation

rather than revolt. They are studying so that they will have opportunities in the world of work, and so that they, too, can share in the great American dream of a "good life." There is a growing interest on the part of students in high technology programs, and I will comment on that in more detail a little later.

There is also a tendency for students at Black Hawk, and at most other community colleges, to feel less identification with the college than has been felt by college students in the past. They possess less "school spirit" than traditional college students have seemed to possess. I don't see a change in this condition, but I know that there are many exceptions to this generalization. For instance, the students of our East Campus feel considerably more affection and warmth for Black Hawk College than do the students from our Quad-Cities Campus. The reason is rather simple. The East Campus is the "only show in town," while the Quad-Cities Campus is in contention with three private colleges and there is an Iowa community college just across the Mississippi River from our Quad-Cities Campus.

One clear trend regarding student choices over the past ten years in Illinois has been the tendency to choose vocational and career educational programs in ever greater numbers. This trend may well continue until such students outnumber both the traditional transfer students and the very numerous adult education students who have been enrolling in community colleges.

Moving to another segment of trends dealing with people, we can take a look at trends concerning our faculty and staff members. As students demand increasing numbers of programs in the field of high technology and health occupations, we will be searching for people with highly technical backgrounds who have an interest in teaching and that unique ability to communicate which is the hallmark of a good teacher. These people will be expensive! Even now, it

is a tremendous challenge to hire people in data processing, electronics, business management, machine technology and some of the highly specialized health occupations areas. The salaries they are able to command in the working world generally exceed the salaries we are able to offer by a considerable margin. The only reason we are able to attract any such people is that they like the academic atmosphere and the nine-month work year. Many of them strongly desire to teach in the summer, and we are greatly pleased when they do.

Perhaps you are suffering from another trend that deeply affects your faculty and staffing patterns. Like Black Hawk College, you may be finding it impossible to increase the salaries of your faculty and staff each year at a sufficient rate to keep them even close to inflation, and forget about promotions and service increases. In effect, many faculty and staff members at community colleges have been asked to pay a special tax to their colleges in the form of minimum salary increases over a period of several years. While they have been doing that, it has not been without frustration - and sometimes outright anger.

A recent North Carolina study indicated that a significant number of the most capable teachers were beginning to leave the educational profession. We are beginning to experience some of that at Black Hawk College, and if a referendum we have scheduled for November 3rd should fail, we certainly will feel this to an even greater extent. The inability of community colleges to adequately fund the demands placed upon them is a trend which I see growing for the balance of the 80's, and which I see very little hope of overcoming. Only a major resurgence of the United States economy as a whole could counteract the inadequacy of funding faced by community colleges and the consequent underpayment of faculty and staff members.

The loss of our best teachers and staff members will be a growing challenge, and the increasing demand to perform at unbelievably high levels will have to be met by less experienced and less capable staff members.

If you happen to have a computer on campus which you use to process your administrative work as well as to instruct your students, you probably already have a very clear idea about how difficult it can be to hold on to competent people in an area of high technology. If you offer an electronics program, you may find your students returning to visit after a couple of years in business, and telling your faculty that they are making $2,000 a year more than the faculty member is making. All of us could give dozens of examples along the lines of those I have just given you, but the problem is clear. College faculty and staff members are being paid less and less well as time goes on.

Let's think for a moment about community college trustees. Are you finding it more and more difficult to get good people to run for your Board? Are your trustees tending to serve for fewer years than they used to? Do the trustees feel buried by the mountain of information they must read and analyze in order to make sensible decisions? Do your trustees feel under pressure from their constituents to respond to complaints about taxes and small problems at your college?

All of these questions serve to point up another ominous trend which we are experiencing. It is less and less pleasurable to be a trustee, and people are feeling less and less like investing their precious personal time in what is becoming an almost thankless job. If you now have a good Board of Trustees, I suggest you treasure them! Do everything you can as administrators and faculty members to make their job both possible and pleasant. Prepare for Board meetings as thoroughly as you know how, and help the Board to look good.

An informed Board will make reasonable decisions. A Board that receives too little information and receives it too late must make poor decisions.

We have talked about people, and people are those who receive the benefits of, or who create, the educational and community service programs which community colleges are all about. Earlier, I mentioned briefly the need for teachers in high technology programs, and this need arises simply because today's economy demands graduates of nigh technology programs. While I could name dozens of examples, it seems to me that two or three will suffice to illustrate where great demands are now rising.

One high technology program which undergirds so many other programs throughout our world today is data processing. An understanding of the operation of a computer ought to be something demanded by every student at a community college. Some will need to go beyond what we might call "computer literacy" and become computer programmers and/or operators. A community college can prepare good computer programmers, but it generally remains for the universities to take these programmers and help them to become programmer analysts or systems analysts.

Another high technology area which is critically important today is the whole field of electronics. Interestingly enough, you probably have observed that both computers and other electronic devices are growing more and more important in the health services occupations. Here we have another area of tremendous growth which community colleges are uniquely equipped to handle. The only difficulty with high technology and health occupations programs is that they are generally very costly to create and to continue.

Another program area that you will probably find growing is the whole business administration and mid-management area. Office occupations courses

also continue to grow in popularity, although at a slower pace. In general, our economy is seeing a massive growth in all the service industries, as opposed to the manufacturing industries. Our students come to us now with a need for training in a variety of occupational areas that will fit them for a variety of jobs in service industries.

Perhaps your college is one of those that has experienced a massive need for adult basic education, the kinds of courses that help to remove people from the welfare roles and put them into tax-paying employment. Only seven or eight districts in Illinois have felt a strong calling for this kind of effort, but students of such programs number over one hundred thousand. All too often, such adult basic education programs are given a low priority and low funding by the state, but they save multiple millions of dollars each year in money which I consider largely wasted - money spent on continuing welfare payments to people who are ready and willing to work, if only they were adequately trained.

Enough about programs. You see the trends, I suspect, as well as I do, if not better. So, let's move on to an area that is of concern to us all, since our people and programs are made weak and helpless by a lack of money. Let us talk about finances. It is simply impossible to talk about financing a community college today without thinking about inflation. A couple of months ago, I got a little reminder from the local utility company that I had an overdue utility bill, and so I sent them a nice little note which said, "Gentlemen, thank you very much for your reminder about my overdue utility bill. Unfortunately, you have caught me at a very bad time - 1981."

Ladies and gentlemen, that's the way a lot of us feel as we see our bills growing at home and in our colleges. And I really knew that it had to happen.

The other day my wife asked me to go to the grocery store to do some shopping. I walked by the meat counter and there it was! A steak with a mortgage!

And I really don't mind being told to live within my income - but by the federal government?!

I brought along a hand-out for you that traces the history of the consumer price index and a couple of measures which are its historical antecedents. This index dates back to the year 1800 and you can have quite a bit of fun studying it and using it to figure out how well or how poorly you are doing today compared to any number of years ago. In the last ten years at Black Hawk College, the consumer price index has slightly more than doubled, while our cost of educating each student has increased only 63%. Now, understand, we didn't choose, necessarily, to hold our cost of instruction to this relatively low level, but lack of money has forced us to do just that. We are economical in the extreme. In fact, I believe we have reached the point where we are beginning to shortchange our students, and inflation may force us to do even more of that shortchanging over the next decade. I hope the financial situation in Kansas is considerably better than it is in much of Illinois, but I suspect that it is not.

Perhaps you are facing a situation similar to that which is found in so many community colleges and schools throughout our country. Local tax rates have often existed without change for anywhere from 10-15 years. In our case, the building and maintenance fund tax rate is 19 years old. It now produces just enough money to pay our utility bill and nothing else!

Perhaps you have been reading about the school system in Alpena, Michigan, which recently closed its doors after failures of a number of operating tax rate referenda. The opposition was led by senior citizens who stated that 70%

of the people in that district no longer had children in school and did not feel interested in supporting the school system. Where is the romance that the American people used to have with their public schools? Where did this "me first" attitude begin to develop among our senior citizens? How have they forgotten that someone paid for their education decades ago and gave them the chance to earn the retirement they are now trying to enjoy? Nor is it only the senior citizen who is resisting increases in taxes. At Black Hawk College, we even find our students are parrotting their parents and saying NO to tax rate increases. If you are one of those unfortunate districts which is faced with inadequate tax rates, and with a state which is unable to fund you sufficiently to offer quality education, you have my deep sympathy and my complete understanding, for that is exactly where our college is today.

You simply cannot talk about college finance without considering tuition. All of us who have been in community colleges for any period of time know that the philosophy of the community college is to maintain the lowest possible tuition rate commensurate with quality education. And yet, across the country, community colleges are having to increase their tuition rate to a level never conceived by the founding fathers. Even though these high tuition rates still are a great bargain when compared to most state universities and almost all private colleges and universities, they are far beyond a level suggested by community college philosophy. And these high tuition rates are having to be levied at a time when student financial aid money is becoming scarcer. Nor is the picture much brighter in the near future. Only a major improvement in the American economy is likely to brighten the outlook for added student financial aid money, and that improvement in the economy is unlikely to occur in less than two or three years - at the earliest.

State financing in Illinois is a series of withdrawn promises. Great plans are developed by Blue Ribbon Committees which establish new sets of rules for state funding. The rules are adopted, the amounts of money due each college are determined, and the state then apologetically reduces those reasonably determined amounts of money to a lower level. In Illinois, state funding has actually been reduced on a per credit hour basis a few cents this year compared to last year. In the past, when the state was short of money, the practice was to simply prorate whatever available money there was and pay us part of our claim. That pretense is no longer being made. The state is simply saying that it does not have enough money to fund expected enrollments. Our colleges may grow, but we will only receive a limited number of dollars, no matter how much we grow.

I am not sure how the situation is in Kansas, but federal dollars are a relatively small portion of the funding for most Illinois community colleges. By and large, federal dollars would not account for more than 2% of community college funding directly. But federal dollars do have a major impact on student financial aid and in the funding for adult basic education, which comes from the federal government to Illinois and is routed through the state office. If you do not have an adult basic education program, you will probably only feel the effects of reduced student financial aid, and of reduced funding for vocational education equipment. Federal funding is unlikely to improve for at least three years, since again we must wait for a resurgence in the American economy. We can only hope that there will be such a resurgence, but my crystal ball is extremely cloudy on this point. I can only hope!

Let's think about facilities. Probably most of you began the development of your campuses soon after 1965, and may well have had the majority of your

campus built by the early 1970's. Those facilities are now 8-10 years old, and they are beginning to show signs of aging. The boilers are beginning to get cranky, the paint is peeling, the carpets are wearing, the roofs are beginning to spring troublesome leaks here and there, and the roadways are beginning to break up under difficult winter conditions. When considering facilities, we can clearly see the obvious trend of aging buildings. That trend is fixed on into the future, and only the extent of the utilization of your facilities will determine how fast they will deteriorate.

A solid communuity college building should be good for at least 50 years, but it will need maintenance and improvements all during its lifetime. The cost of that maintenance and those improvements will be increasing 8-12% a year, if recent history is any indicator. Some of you may be fortunate enough to have sufficient money to build a new facility now and then, but most community colleges are likely to live with what they have now. There is a tendency for buildings to deteriorate more rapidly as they age, and for them to be less useful as they become more antiquated.

The energy crisis has made many of our relatively new facilities somewhat obsolescent already. We have learned that buildings designed in the mid 60's do not accommodate the low energy consumption requirements of the 1980's. Modifications must be made, and many of these modifications are terribly costly. I have visited four or five community college campuses in Illinois which were designed without thermal windows. If that shocks you, join the crowd. When I asked how anybody could design a midwestern facility without thermal windows, I was told that generally, the architects came from the far west or the southwest. That may excuse the architects, but it does not excuse administrators and trustees who probably ought to have noticed something wrong.

Some campuses are now systematically replacing all windows with thermal windows at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars. Fortunately, my college doesn't have that need, for we certainly don't have that money. We have managed to cut back energy consumption, which has resulted in an average savings per year for the past five years of over $150,000 - over $750,000 saved in that time period. But the discomfort we have suffered to be able to do that verges on the ridiculous. I have seen students and staff members in classrooms and offices huddled in their coats, and occasionally wearing gloves, during the winter. We have gone to a four-day work week in the summer in order to conserve energy, both in our own campus utilities and in the use of gasoline by our staff and students.

The trend toward energy conservation has only begun. The need to conserve energy must grow in this decade of the 80's. We must be able to invest in devices to control and reduce our energy use, but such devices often take a large initial investment. Their pay-out may be five years and, often, the cash to make such improvements is not available even on a loaned basis.

We have spent some time dealing with the trends for the 80's which concern people, programs, finances, and facilities. Not so long ago, I gave a speech in our community to several groups that I called "It's Time For A Little S.A.P.!" My message was that it is time for a little studied analytical panic. We need an impressive nationwide campaign on the value of community colleges! The glamour of education at all levels is dying in the minds of too many people, and that glamour needs to be restored, since education is vital to this country and to the rest of the world. Nor will a good high school education suffice for at least 40% of the people in America.

It is probably still true that only about 20% of our people really need a baccalaureate degree for the work they will do in life, but it is also increasingly true that at least 40% of the people must have an education at the associate degree level in order to cope with this increasingly complex world we live in.

If you do not have a potent and active trustees association in Kansas, it is almost past time to create one. If you do not have an active and involved association of community college presidents in Kansas, begin one tomorrow.

The trends I have been discussing are fairly elementary, and probably very obvious to almost everybody in this room. They will not go away, so we must learn how to live with them and to prepare for these trends that will bring impressive changes in all our lives.

I HAVE A DREAM ---!

(Apologies and thanks to Dr. Martin Luther King)

Yes, I do have a dream, and perhaps there is much in my dream that you have dreamed too!

I dream of students from all walks of life entering all our community colleges - young students and senior citizens - the most capable and those in need of considerable individual help - students seeking a Baccalaureate degree, those needing a degree in a technical field, those seeking developmental coursework, and students seeking education for the pure pleasure of learning!

And, my dream is that we who serve these students will be able to meet all their needs with skill, with humanity and with abundant quality.

My dream continues. In it, all our staffs and faculties consistently demonstrate high ability to teach, to counsel, to advise, to serve and to

inspire our students. Our teachers without fail earn the respect of our students through the excellence of their knowledge, preparation and presentation!

In my dream, our administrators provide truly fine leadership. Their planning and organizing efforts are consistently outstanding. They unfailingly demonstrate understanding and concern for the needs and desires of our students, faculty and staff. Their solutions to problems are carefully considered and proven through time to have been correct.

My dream goes on as I envision of Boards of Trustees whose vision and insight are unparalleled throughout higher education. I see each Board member demonstrating great wisdom in all the deliberations faced at each meeting, and I dream of the courage each Board member exhibits in facing critical issues of policy and finance.

My dream unfolds further to reveal colleges adequately financed, well-equipped, and properly staffed to provide the comprehensive education and services which are the heart of our mission, and for which we all were created!

My dream does not stop, for it reveals alumni who are successful in later life, and who remember us with respect and affection.

And best of all, there is much of present reality in my dream, for our colleges have had and continue even now to have students from all walks of life, well-trained and capable faculty and staff members, concerned board members, and successful alumni.

My dream is not a fantasy. It is a possibility! Realizing all of it will require the best each of us has to give, but <u>our best</u> will be good enough to see it done.

If the task begins to overwhelm you, as it often does me and the staff members at my college, perhaps you will draw a small amount of comfort from these last thoughts which I want to offer you.

I am only one.
But I am one.

I cannot do everything.
But I can do something.

What I can do, I must do.

What I must do, by the grace
of God, I will do!

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